

January 12, 2021

Andrei V. Gudkov, Editor in Chief
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Subject:

Article 3: **Transglutaminase is a mesothelioma cancer stem cell survival protein that is required for tumor formation. Adhikary, G., Grun, D., Alexander, H. R., Friedberg, J. S., Xu, W., Keillor, J. W., ... & Eckert, R. L. (2018). *Oncotarget*, 9(77), 34495.**

Article 6: **Fisher, M. L., Grun, D., Adhikary, G., Xu, W., & Eckert, R. L. (2017). Inhibition of YAP function overcomes BRAF inhibitor resistance in melanoma cancer stem cells. *Oncotarget*, 8(66), 110257.**

Dear Dr. Gudkov,

I am writing as the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore regarding the Subject publications.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore conducted an internal investigation which found by a preponderance of the evidence that the Subject articles were compromised and the investigation committee recommended retraction for article 3 and correction for article 6 in order to correct the scientific record and ensure its integrity. The University leaves the final decision to retract or correct to the discretion of the journal.

Below are the findings:

- Article #3:

Figure 1I has been manipulated by inserting two (2) cells in the field. Forensic analysis shows that the two (2) cells were not part of the original picture

Figure 3C has been manipulated by inserting three (3) cells in the control field. Forensic analysis shows that the three (3) cells were not part of the original picture.

Figure 4B was manipulated by moving five (5) cells into the field to increase the cell density of the field.

Figure 4B was manipulated by erasing a cell from the 50 μ M NC9 treatment.

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Figure 4B was manipulated by changing the labeling on the treatment condition. The raw data located on the lab server has a file name showing a treatment condition of 1 μ M NC9, while the final figure is showing a control condition with no treatment: 0 μ M NC9.

As presented, figures 1I, 3C and 4B are fabricated in order to support the data presented in the article.

- Article 6:

Figure 3A is falsified by mislabeling the blots. Review of the raw data shows that the labelling is incorrect.

Figure 3B is falsified by mislabeling the blots. Review of the raw data shows that the labelling is incorrect.

Figure 3F is falsified by mislabeling the blots. Review of the raw data shows that the labelling is incorrect.

Figure 4D was falsified by inserting one (1) cell in the 20 μ M Verteporfin field.

As presented, the figure 3A, 3B, 3F and 4D are fabricated in order to support the data presented in the article.

Sincerely,



Dr. Roger J. Ward, JD, MSL, MPA
Interim Provost & Executive Vice President

Cc: Dean E. Albert Reece, Dean of the School of Medicine
Stephan Vignes, Research Integrity Officer